

Message Text

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PAGE 01 DUBLIN 01674 201733Z

41

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C O N F I D E N T I A L DUBLIN 1674

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, EI, UK (NI)

SUBJECT: PROVOS ACCEPT RESPONSIBILITY FOR BRITISH BOMBINGS

REF: LONDON 15040

1. DUBLIN NEWSPAPERS

HAVE RECENTLY REPORTED THAT LOCAL

"REPUBLICAN SOURCES: ACCEPT RESPONSIBILITY OF PROVISIONAL IRA FOR SOME OF RECENT BOMBING ATTACKS IN ENGLAND. (SUCH PRESS REPORTS ARE COMMONLY ACCEPTED AS ACCURATE, UNLESS SINN/FEIN IRA ISSUES A DENIAL.) THE BASIC INCIDENT WHICH DREW THIS ADMISSION FROM PROVOS WAS DEATH OF JAMES MCDADE, WHO WAS KILLED NOVEMBER 14 WHILE PLANTING A BOMB IN COVENTRY. LONG BEFORE THIS TIME, IT HAD BECOME OBVIOUS THAT PROVISIONAL IRA WAS INVOLVED IN ENGLISH BOMBINGS, BUT IT HAD NOT FORMALLY ACCEPTED RESPONSIBILITY. (IT MAKES A PRACTICE OF DOING SO FOR INCIDENTS IN NORTHERN IRELAND.) KILLING OF "VOLUNTEER" MCDADE APPARENTLY OBLIGED CHANGE OF POLICY.

2. BELFAST "IRISH NEWS" ALSO CARRIED DEATH NOTICE IDENTIFYING MCDADE AS A MEMBER OF PROVISIONAL IRA.

3. ON NOVEMBER 17, DAITHI O CONAILL (DAVID O'CONNELL) GAVE INTERVIEW TO BRITISH TELEVISION CREW, APPARENTLY FROM A HIDING PLACE IN REPUBLIC. O CONAILL IS NOW OPENLY IDENTIFIED BY NEWSPAPERS AS CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 DUBLIN 01674 201733Z

PROVISIONALS' CHIEF OF STAFF, AND AGAIN NO DENIAL HAS BEEN ISSUED.

(IN THEORY, PROVISIONALS ATTEMPT TO KEEP THE IDENTITY OF THEIR CHIEF OF STAFF SECRET.) IRISH TV NETWORK COULD NOT CARRY INTERVIEW, DESPITE NORMAL EXCHANGE ARRANGEMENT WITH BBC, BECAUSE GOI POLICY PROHIBITS SUCH PUBLICITY FOR IRA. ON OTHER HAND, NORTHERN PROTESTANTS HAVE BEEN ASKING WHY GOI IS UNABLE TO ARREST O CONAILL WHEN AN ENGLISH TV CREW CAN LOCATE HIM. REFTEL GIVES DETAILS OF INTERVIEW, IN WHICH HE SAID THAT IRA WOULD ESCALATE ITS BRITISH CAMPAIGN AND WOULD STRIKE AT "ECONOMIC, MILITARY, POLITICAL, AND JUDICIAL TARGETS."

4. COMMENT: TWO PREVIOUS IRA "CAMPAIGNS" IN ENGLAND FAILED TO ACHIEVE MUCH (IN LATE THIRTIES AND FIFTIES). BASED ON THIS EXPERIENCE, ANOTHER BOMBING CAMPAIGN IN ENGLAND HAS LONG BEEN CONSIDERED A DESPERATE LAST RESORT FOR PROVOS. BUT TECHNIQUES OF URBAN TERRORISM HAVE ADVANCED SINCE FIFTIES. WE HAVE NO DEFINITE INFORMATION ON PROVO PLANS BUT ASSUME THAT THEY HOPE TO INCREASE ENGLISH PUBLIC DISENCHANTMENT WITH NORTHERN IRELAND AND THUS HASTEN THE DAY OF BRITISH WITHDRAWAL.

5. FROM STANDPOINT OF US POLICY, CENTRAL FACT IS THAT PROVISIONAL IRA HAS EXTENDED ITS CAMPAIGN OF TERRORISM SIGNIFICANTLY OVER LAST FEW MONTHS. AT THIS POINT, WE THINK PROVOS CAN WELL BE CONSIDERED A LEADING TERRORIST ORGANIZATION ON WORLD SCALE.
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